

Message Text

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15

ACTION PM-04

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 ISO-00 MC-02 EB-07 OMB-01 NSC-05 SP-02

SS-15 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 AID-05 IGA-01 DODE-00

L-03 COME-00 TRSE-00 EUR-12 ACDA-05 /076 W

----- 081930

P R 011800Z OCT 75

FM AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8406

INFO USCINCSO

C O N F I D E N T I A L GUATEMALA 5426

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, GT

SUBJ: COMPLAINT OF ALLEGED INVESTIGATION OF C-47 RECONDITION-
ING IN MIAMI

REF: GUATEMALA 5395

SUMMARY: ACTING FOREIGN MINISTER CALLED IN AMBASSADOR
OCT 1 TO EXPRESS FORMAL CONCERN OVER REPORT THAT USG
HAD ATTEMPTED TO STOP RECONDITIONING OF THREE GUATEMALAN C-47S
PRESENTLY IN MIAMI.

ACTING FORNMIN WAS ACCOMPANIED BY DEFENSE MINISTER.
AMBASSADOR ASSURED THEM THAT US WAS CON-
TINUING ROUTINE, AUTHORIZED REPAIRS AND SERVICES OF US-ORIGIN
EQUIPMENT OF GUATEMALAN ARMED FORCES AND WAS POSTPONING
ACTION ONLY ON ANY MAJOR NEW REQUEST FOR NEW EQUIPMENT THAT MIGHT
BE USED AGAINST BELIZE. HE SAID HE WOULD ASK WASHINGTON FOR
AN INVESTIGATION AND REPORT ON ALLEGED INCIDENT. END SUMMARY.

1. AMBASSADOR WAS ASKED TO CALL ON ACTING FOREIGN MINISTER
OBIOLS AT 10 AM OCT 1. MINDEF LUCAS WAS WITH OBIOLS WHEN
AMBASSADOR ARRIVED.

2. OBIOLS SAID PRESIDENT HAD THOUGHT IT USEFUL FOR TWO
OF THEM TO SEE THE AMBASSADOR. RECENTLY US HAD TAKEN A
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NUMBER OF ACTIONS WHICH WERE PUZZLING TO GOG AND CAUSED

IT CONCERN. ONE OF THEM, WHICH WAS DESCRIBED IN LTR HE HANDED THE AMB, HAD CAUSED GOG TO BE UNCERTAIN AS TO ATTITUDE AND POSITION OF US IN "MOMENT OF GREAT DIFFICULTY" FOR GUATEMALA. AT REQUEST OF PRESIDENT HE WAS HANDING THIS LTR TO AMB BEFORE TAKING ANY OTHER ACTION.

3. LETTER, WHICH AMBASSADOR THEN READ, SAYS (IN TRANSLATION AND OMITTING COMPLIMENTARY OPENING AND CLOSING) "GOG HAS BEEN INFORMED BY MR SAUL URRUTIA, REPRESENTATIVE OF A COMPANY IN MIAMI THAT RECONDITIONS GUATEMALAN ARMY AIRCRAFT, THAT RECENTLY HIS WORK WAS INTERRUPTED BY A VISIT FROM SUPPOSED OR REAL AGENTS OF A US SECURITY AGENCY, FOR THE PURPOSE OF SUSPENDING THIS WORK BECAUSE IT WAS MILITARY MATERIAL OF THE GOG. THIS ATTITUDE APPEARS SO STRANGE THAT GOG, BEFORE TAKING ANY ACTION, WOULD LIKE USG TO MAKE AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE MATTER AND TO COMMUNICATE (THE RESULTS) IN THE SHORTEST POSSIBLE TIME."

4. AMBASSADOR SAID HE WAS GREATLY SURPRISED AND WAS AWARE OF NO SUCH ACTION BY ANY USG AGENCY. IT COULD POSSIBLY HAVE BEEN A ROUTINE INVESTIGATION WITH PURPOSE OF ASSURING THAT PLANES WERE LEGITIMATELY DESTINED FOR GOG AND NOT SOME PRIVATE VENTURE TO CONTRAVENE US EXPORT REGULATIONS. IN ANY EVENT HE WOULD INFORM USG AND REQUEST REPORT ASAP. AS FAR AS OVERALL USG POLICY IS CONCERNED, AMB. SAID HE COULD ASSURE MINISTERS THAT IT WAS NOT OUR POLICY TO INTERFERE WITH ROUTINE, AUTHORIZED REPAIRS AND SERVICING OF PREVIOUSLY FURNISHED EQUIPMENT. HOWEVER, BECAUSE OF CONDITIONS WHICH GOG ITSELF HAS CREATED, US, DESPITE ITS DESIRE TO BE OF HELP TO ITS GUATEMALAN FRIENDS, CANNOT AT THIS TIME RESPOND AFFIRMATIVELY TO ANY NEW REQUEST FOR SIGNIFICANT NEW SHIPMENTS OF MILITARY EQUIPMENT, AS LONG AS DANGER EXISTS THAT IT MIGHT BE USED AGAINST BRITISH FORCES IN BELIZE.

5. AMB ASKED WHETHER URRUTIA HAD STOPPED HIS WORK. MOD ADMITTED HE HAD NOT, BUT SAID HE WAS FEARFUL AND INTIMIDATED. INCIDENT RAISED QUESTION AS TO CONFIDENTIAL

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WHETHER US IS DELIBERATELY PUTTING OBSTACLES IN GUATEMALA'S PATH. AMB SUGGESTED GOG LOOK AT OTHER NORMAL, ROUTINE REQUESTS IT HAD MADE AND HOW THEY HAD BEEN HANDLED. FOR EXAMPLE US HAD VERY RAPIDLY RECENTLY AUTHORIZED PASSAGE OF TWO GUATEMALAN SHIPS THROUGH THE PANAMA CANAL FROM PACIFIC TO ATLANTIC PORTS OF GUATEMALA WITH REPAIRS TO BE PERFORMED ENROUTE. HE WAS HOPEFUL GOG SAW IN THIS OUR DESIRE TO BE AS FORTHCOMING AS WE CAN ON NORMAL

REQUESTS.

6. AMB NOTED THAT OBIOLS HAD SAID THAT US ACTIONS IN THE PLURAL HAD GIVEN GOG CONCERN. HE ASKED WHAT OTHER ACTIONS WERE BEING REFERRED TO. LUCAS SAID THAT APART FROM THE LONG-STANDING REQUEST TO BUY ADDITIONAL C-47S (REFTEL), THERE WAS THE QUESTION OF THE M-16S (STATE 223221). LOCAL GUATEMALAN AGENT HAD GOTTEN COOL RECEPTION WHEN HE BROACHED SUBJECT TO DATT. GOG COULD OF COURSE BUY SIMILAR WEAPONS FROM OTHER COUNTRIES, BUT MUCH PREFER TO GET THEM FROM US. COLT REP, SYMINGTON, HAD TOLD GUATEMALANS THAT IF GOG DID NOT BUY M-16S, COLT COULD ALWAYS SELL THEM TO THE BRITISH. LUCAS ASKED EMOTIONALLY AND EMPHATICALLY HOW WE COULD CONSIDER THAT EVENHANDED, WHEN WE WOULD SELL RIFLES TO UK BUT NOT TO GUATEMALA. FURTHERMORE, KBHERE HAD BEEN ALL KINDS OF DELAYS ON SPARE PARTS. FOR EXAMPLE, IT WAS NECESSARY TO WAIT THREE TO SIX MONTHS FOR SPARES FOR GUATEMALA'S A-37S.

7. LUCAS THEN LAUNCHED INTO EMOTIONAL HARANGUE ABOUT MILITARY THREAT FACING GUATEMALA FROM ITS NEIGHBORS. HE SAID THAT SALVADOR HAD TREMENDOUS POPULATION PRESSURE AND SALVADOREANS WERE IN FACT CARRYING OUT QUIET CIVILIAN INVASION OF SOUTHERN GUATEMALA. SALVADOR ALSO HAS MORE PLANES THAN GUATEMALA AND IS WELL ARMED. PRESIDENT MOLINA MIGHT BE OVERTHROWN AT ANY TIME AND NEW GOVT MIGHT WELL BE COMMUNIST DOMINATED. HONDURAS IS AS WZTL TREMBLING ON THE EDGE OF GOING COMMUNIST. AMBASSADOR ASSURED MINISTERS THAT DELAYS IN SPARE PARTS AND MAP EQUIPMENT WERE NORMAL ONES AND NOT POLICY OF DELIBERATE OBSTRUCTION. SALVADOREANS WERE PROBABLY ALSO EXPERIENCING SIMILAR DELAYS IN GETTING SPARE PARTS FOR THEIR

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EQUIPMENT. HE REPEATED THAT ONLY POLICY OF LIMITATION USG HAS IS ON NEW REQUESTS FOR MAJOR ITEMS THAT COULD BE USED AGAINST THE BRITISH IN CONNECTION WITH THE BELIZE DISPUTE. HE SAID THAT IF THIS QUESTION HAD BEEN RAISED WITH COMUSMILGP HE WAS SURE LUCAS WOULD HAVE GOTTEN A PROMPT AND SATISFACTORY ANSWER, BUT AS MINISTERS HAD RAISED IT WITH AMBASSADOR HE WOULD ASK WASHINGTON TO LOOK INTO IT.

8. REMAINDER OF 90 MIN. CONVERSATION CONCERNED BELIZE ISSUE AND WILL BE REPORTED SEPTTEL.

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